

the crews in the after-action review.

Other scenarios with different tasks can be used, of course, so long as they expose crews to realistic situations, assess their reactions and subsequent actions, and critique their performance. The standards for these evaluations are taken directly from ARTEP 71-2, FC 17-16-2 (Company Maintenance Team ARTEP Mission Training Plan), and FC 71-7 (LOG STX). The standards listed in FC 17-16-2 were adapted by our battalion to fit other evaluated CSS elements (Table 2).

Situation test courses should be established to look like the situation being replicated, and crews should negotiate a course under an initial predetermined scenario (mission briefing) such as the following:

Move forward to (grid location) vicinity BP 1 to (task) evacuate a casualty. HIND helicopters have been sighted operating in the task force's sector. Forward elements have reported small enemy patrols penetrating the FLOT. The enemy has employed chem-

COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Communications section.
Company supply.
Transportation section (support platoon).
Fuel section (support platoon).
Company maintenance sections.
Battalion recovery section.
Medical platoon.
Mess teams.

Table 2.

ical weapons and is expected to continue to do so. Standing operating procedures are in effect. Here are your graphics and your call-sign information. You must reach your destination before FENT.

With that, the crews (or a combination of support vehicles) move out along the designated main or alternate supply route.

A course can be supported with low-cost training aids such as a HIND silhouette mounted on a SAAB device with hostile fire devices attached; actual and simulated enemy troops (targets);

decontamination markers; obstacle and barrier materials; and pyrotechnics and blanks for simulating signals, artillery, and direct fire weapons.

The end result of this process is an assessment of a CSS crew's training proficiency in battlefield survival and mission accomplishment. Through the assessment, a crew and its platoon leader or supervisor can schedule future training activities that are designed to strengthen marginal areas of performance and correct weaknesses before task force field operations begin and CSS elements are dispersed.

If they are properly trained, CSS crews can meet the constant challenge of providing daily support regardless of adversity. Although they alone cannot win battles, they can certainly help prevent defeat.

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Personal Reconnaissance

CAPTAIN JOSEPH L. VOTEL

AirLand Battle doctrine places great emphasis on reconnaissance operations, which are often conducted to support other operations such as a defense or an attack. Scout platoons are organized to conduct these operational missions, but there is another form of reconnaissance that is equally important—the personal reconnaissance conducted by leaders as part of their troop leading procedures.

In a personal reconnaissance, a

leader gathers information from a variety of sources, including his own visual observation, and uses this information to change or complete a tentative plan made earlier. Through a personal reconnaissance, a leader gains information about the enemy and also a clear picture of the terrain over which he will fight. This type of reconnaissance is particularly applicable to small unit leaders at squad through battalion level.

Personal reconnaissance may be the most important combat multiplier a commander or leader has at his

immediate disposal. Given the tempo and the challenges of the AirLand Battlefield, therefore, it is vital that leaders develop a technique or process that will help them conduct an effective personal reconnaissance. The methodology presented here can serve as a starting point for such a process at the small unit level.*

In preparing for a personal reconnaissance, a leader should review several key considerations, because the facts and deductions that will result from an analysis of them will probably determine the extent of his reconnais-

*Lieutenant Colonel Rick Rhoades suggested several of the ideas that appear in this article.

sance. These considerations are the following:

Time Available. Before conducting a reconnaissance, a leader must determine the amount of time he has available for it. A lack of time or a tired leader will affect the extent and quality of the reconnaissance, but the best-laid plans often fail because a leader does not modify his initial plans on the basis of the actual terrain and the enemy situation. Time should therefore be allocated to reconnaissance in every situation where it is practical. And because reconnaissance is a continuous process, time for it should be built into the leader's schedule throughout the troop leading procedures. If only a limited amount of time is available, time spent on terrain reconnaissance will give the leader his greatest payoff.

In deciding how much time he has, a leader must consider the size of the area he needs to reconnoiter and the time it will take him to move to and from the recon site. For example, a light infantry leader will not be able to cover as much terrain as a leader who is mounted. Time must also be allowed for maintaining security and stealth.

Priorities. Because time will often limit a leader's reconnaissance effort, he must place priorities on what he needs to look at, choosing what is most important on the basis of his unit's assigned task and its purpose. Many tasks will compete for the top spot, but there are two ways in which priorities for the reconnaissance effort can be assigned.

The first is to make a detailed study of the tasks assigned to the unit and the purposes to be achieved. A leader can do this by a thorough mission analysis during his estimate of the situation. From this mission analysis, the leader can then decide what the unit's essential tasks are—tasks that are vital to the success of the unit's mission. Thus, a small unit leader must make a clear determination of all the tasks he is responsible for and then make sure the most important portions of the plan are reconnoitered first.

The second way is to analyze and wargame the friendly and enemy

courses of action during the estimate process. This will help the leader find the important areas or places for reconnaissance. Detailed wargaming often points to the significance of various pieces of terrain or critical events that will have a great bearing on the successful accomplishment of the mission. By finding these areas or activities before his reconnaissance, a leader can conduct a more effective reconnaissance to confirm or deny his chosen course of action.

A leader then follows his priority list of reconnaissance sites as he conducts his recon, performing the most vital ones first. Then if time becomes available later in the troop leading procedures, he can reconnoiter the other sites on the list.

Personnel Required for Reconnaissance. The smallest reconnaissance element will consist of the leader and a security element. The leader (or leaders) who will be responsible for executing an action at a particular site should certainly participate.

The primary considerations to keep in mind when deciding on the size of a reconnaissance element are security and stealth. Security for a reconnaissance element increases as the size of the element increases. Although a larger element may mean more firepower or protection, it also means the element is more likely to be detected. Stealth must also be maintained, because if a recon party is compromised, the mission itself may be compromised. Larger recon parties trade away stealth and increase their chances of being detected.

The size of the area to be reconnoitered and the time available also affect the number of people in the party. Subordinate leaders and attached element leaders such as fire support officers and engineers are excellent candidates for reconnaissance elements.

Development of a Reconnaissance Plan. An informally developed plan helps a leader conduct a more efficient and effective terrain reconnaissance. A reconnaissance plan should include the following considerations:

- The composition and task organi-

zation of the recon element.

- The key facts to be gained from the recon.
- Movement routes to the recon site and the formations to be used.
- The actions to be taken at the recon site release point and any control measures to be used.
- Special instructions to members of the recon element.
- Any special equipment needed.
- Contingency plans—actions on contact; actions if the recon party does not return; the evacuation of casualties.
- Stay-behind surveillance.
- Indirect fire support for the reconnaissance.
- Communication arrangements.
- A plan for withdrawing from the recon site.
- A plan for disseminating the information gathered.

Above all, the plan must be simple and concise. Unit SOPs, if they have been developed for this purpose, can help in the development and execution of reconnaissance plans.

Actions at the Reconnaissance Site. Assuming that the leader has enough time to conduct a physical reconnaissance, he must next decide what happens at each recon site, and this is the most difficult part. If a personal reconnaissance is not thoroughly planned, much time and effort may be wasted.

Studying the terrain and its effect on both friendly and enemy courses of action will provide most of the information the leader needs. A number of questions can be asked to help determine the effect of terrain:

From the enemy's perspective:

- What does the enemy want to do here? Can he do it?
- What obstacles are there to his course of action?
- Does the avenue of approach support his needs?
- Does he have good cover and concealment?
- Can he observe the friendly forces? Can he place effective fires on them? Where is he likely to position his key weapon systems?
- Is this location key or decisive terrain to him?

- What alternative actions are available to him?

- Based upon the reconnaissance, what modifications should be made to the enemy situational template that was developed during the estimate process?

From the friendly perspective:

- Can the friendly unit at this site accomplish its mission? Would other weapons or units be better suited?

- What obstacles are there? Are more obstacles needed? What type? Where?

- Does the avenue of approach support the friendly course of action? What can be done to block this avenue to the enemy?

- Does this terrain offer good cover and concealment for friendly forces?

- Does the terrain allow adequate observation and fields of fire? Where might key weapons be placed to suppress the enemy?

- Is this key or decisive terrain to friendly forces?

- What alternative actions are available to friendly forces?

- What modifications should be made to the friendly course of action on the basis of the reconnaissance?

Along with these military aspects of the terrain, the leader must integrate the military aspects of the weather (visibility, precipitation, wind, tempera-

ture) to determine its potential effects on both the friendly and the enemy courses of action. Weather factors often alter terrain and affect the ability of both sides to use it.

By evaluating the enemy factors, the leader can refine the situational templates that were developed during the estimate process. Among the many



items the leader should try to identify are prepared and occupied positions, the location of key weapon systems, gaps and weak points in his positions, fire sacks, and locations for deploying his forces.

An evaluation of friendly factors follows the same flow as enemy considerations in determining whether the reconnoitered area supports the leader's plan. For example, the leader should evaluate the location of key weapon systems, engagement areas,

positions for supporting fires, and sub-unit objectives. The specific task and nature of the operation determines what the leader must consider for friendly factors.

Observation posts that "stay behind" after the reconnaissance can help the leader maintain surveillance on the enemy and can ensure that the best and most current information will be used to execute the plan.

Personal reconnaissance is the commander's key to success on the AirLand Battlefield. To gain the most from it, however, he must carefully analyze the time available, the priorities, and the tasks to be accomplished during his reconnaissance effort.

After action reports from the National Training Center, as well as historical combat examples, consistently point to the need for effective leader reconnaissance. The offensive nature of the AirLand Battle will require that leaders use reconnaissance to gain and maintain the initiative and to help them focus overwhelming combat power on the enemy.

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Dragon Assault Position

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Motorized infantry is organized and equipped for, trained in, and committed to the conduct of combat operations that are characterized by high mobility, speed, and the deliberate and conscious choice of a time and place for engaging the enemy. Its primary advan-

tage over light infantry is found in its increased mobility and firepower, both of which must be at their best to achieve success on the highly fluid AirLand Battlefield.

The Dragon fighting position currently found in STP 7-11B1-SM, dated

July 1985, as task number 071-317-3307, is not well suited to the rapid and volatile tactical operations needed for the effective employment of a motorized infantry company's 15 Dragon systems.

In an article titled "Using Dragons